

# Australians say health workers should get COVID jab first

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Australians say frontline healthcare workers and aged and disability carers should be the first to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, according to new research from The Australian National University (ANU).

The survey of more than 3,000 Australians used an experimental approach to identify who Australians think should be the first groups to receive an effective [vaccine](#) once developed.

Paramedics topped the list, followed by aged and disabled carers, registered nurses, nursing support workers and general practitioners.

Primary school teachers were the next highest group of professionals Australians said should be among the first to receive a COVID vaccine. Childcare workers also make the top 10.

Report co-author Professor Nicholas Biddle, from the ANU Center for Social Research and Methods, said the study was the first test of the relative weight Australians put on different individuals' characteristics in terms of who should receive a vaccine. The survey also examined how respondents' characteristics influenced their decisions.

"The world is waiting with bated breath for a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19. If and when it does become available, a decision will need to be made about how it will be distributed and what criteria will be used to identify who receives the vaccine first," Professor Biddle said.

"Such a decision will inevitably take into account the health and economic benefits of some groups receiving it ahead of others. Our findings show that Australians think that people who are working on the frontline of healthcare need to be vaccinated first. This makes perfect sense when you consider where most of our second wave of COVID-19 infections have come from and that these are the professionals who are directly dealing with the aftermath of this pandemic on a daily basis. The same can be said for aged and disability carers, who are providing care to some of the people most vulnerable to the terrible effects of this virus. Our report gives some insights from Australian voters when it comes to answering the question of who gets a vaccine first."

The survey also examined who Australians thought should receive a vaccine based on a range of other demographics, including gender, age, health and employment status.

"Unsurprisingly, Australians think those with pre-existing [health conditions](#) should have the highest priority when it comes to a vaccine," co-author Professor Matthew Gray said. "This was the group with the highest support among respondents. Females are very slightly preferred over males and older Australians are slightly preferred over younger Australians."

Professor Gray also highlighted there was no difference between whether or not Australians think individuals with Asian names should receive the vaccine first compared to people with Anglo-Celtic names.

"This is important because indications of at least some increase in anti-Asian views has not translated into a view that people with an Asian name should be given lower priority in access to a COVID-19 vaccine," Professor Gray said.

The survey forms part of the COVID monitoring program led by the ANU Center for Social Research and Methods. The research was supported by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the survey was conducted by the Social Research Center.

**More information:** Public attitudes on vaccine distribution: [csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/ ... vaccine-distribution](https://csrcm.cass.anu.edu.au/research/...vaccine-distribution)

Provided by Australian National University

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